UNITED
NATIONS

A

General Assembly

PROVISIONAL

A/46/PV.29
16 October 1991

ENGLISH

Forty-sixth session

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 29th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Thursday, 10 October 1991, at 10 a.m.

President:	Mr. SHIHABI	(Saudi Arabia)
later:	Mr. GHEZAL (Vice-President)	(Tunisia)
later:	Mr. SHIHABI	(Saudi Arabia)

- General debate [9] (continued)

Statements made by

Mr. Wonani (Zambia)
Mr. Berenger (Mauritius)
Mr. Kamikamica (Fiji)
Mr. Ssemogerere (Uganda)
Mr. Kalnins (Latvia)
Mrs. af Ugglas (Sweden)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 9 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. WONANI (Zambia): May I add Zambia's voice to those of other representatives who have addressed sincere felicitations to you, Sir, on your election to the high office of President of the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session. You bring to the presidency immense diplomatic skill and experience - attributes that are particularly essential in this epoch-making period in the history of the United Nations and of international relations. You are the eminent representative of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, a country with which Zambia enjoys most cordial relations. My delegation is therefore confident that you will guide our deliberations to a successful conclusion.

Your predecessor, Mr. Guido de Marco, presided with great tact and determination at the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly. We thank him for a job well done.

Similarly, my delegation pays a deserved tribute to Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, the Secretary-General, for his tireless efforts - spanning a period of 10 years - in the search for global peace and harmony. He has, indeed, served us well through some of the most trying moments in the history of our Organization.

(Mr. Wonani, Zambia)

Zambia warmly welcomes the admission to our midst of the new Members, namely, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Republic of Korea, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands and the Baltic States of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Their admission is clear testimony of our resolve to attain universality in the membership of the United Nations. In the case of the two Koreas it is my delegation's hope that their membership will hasten the process of the reunification of their motherland.

The demise of the cold war era has injected a welcome spirit of cooperation and accommodation in international relations. In this regard the preservation of international peace and security, the primary goal of the United Nations, is now a real possibility. There now exists an atmosphere conducive to the fulfilment of the goals and purposes of the United Nations. Public perception of the United Nations and confidence in it have consequently been greatly enhanced. Indeed, the United Nations now truly stands as a centre-piece of multilateralism. This is as it should be.

As is well known, the United Nations was established with the primary goal of the maintenance of international peace and security. To that end the Organization was to serve as the central forum for negotiations and the harmonization of actions of Member States. In this respect the United Nations has a solemn and legitimate responsibility for ensuring the realization of general and complete disarmament under effective international control.

It is encouraging to note that in the recent past important agreements have been concluded, including the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe and the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START). My delegation has also welcomed the recent initiatives announced by the President of the

(Mr. Wonani, Zambia)

United States, Mr. George Bush, relating to nuclear disarmament and the encouraging responses from the President of the Soviet Union, Mr. Mikhail Gorbachev. These efforts are laudable and quite significant in terms of maintaining the momentum generated by the conclusion of the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles.

These efforts notwithstanding, it remains Zambia's firm view that real efforts should continue to be made towards the realization of the goal of general and complete disarmament. To achieve this noble goal, the United Nations must work tirelessly towards a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty.

Zambia welcomes the decisions by the Governments of China and France to become parties to the non-proliferation Treaty. My Government has also decided to become a party to that Treaty and the instruments of accession have already been deposited with the depositary Governments.

My delegation is gratified by the progress achieved thus far in the peaceful settlement of a number of regional conflicts with the active involvement of the United Nations It is our sincere hope that this momentum will be accelerated towards the resolution of conflicts in Cambodia, Cyprus, El Salvador and Western Sahara. We appeal to the parties to the conflicts to cooperate with the Secretary-General and ensure the implementation of the relevant resolutions.

Concerning Afghanistan, we welcome the recent agreement between the Soviet Union and the United States to cease the supply of arms to the parties to the conflict. We urge the Afghan people to enter into negotiations among themselves in order to bring peace and stability to their country.

With regard to Cuba, we strongly support the proposal by the President of Venezuela, Mr. Carlos Andres Perez, urging the Government of the United States

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of America to lift the economic embargo against that country, which has been in effect for more than 30 years. It is our view that this proposal reflects the prevailing international political and security climate.

In Yugoslavia we urge the European Community to persevere in its efforts to bring an immediate end to the armed hostilities in that country, which have already taken a heavy toll in both lives and property.

The situation in the Middle East continues to be of great concern to the entire world. We in Zambia continue to believe that there can be no lasting solution to the situation in the Middle East until the question of Palestine is justly addressed in terms of Security Council resolutions 242 (1969) and 338 (1973) and other relevant United Nations resolutions and decisions.

We continue to support the call for the convening of an international conference on the Middle East involving all parties, including the Palestine Liberation Organization. We consider the continuing construction of new settlements in the occupied territories as an obstacle to peace and we call on Israel to desist from this untenable practice.

With regard to Liberia, we continue to suport the sincere efforts under way to restore peace and stability in that country. In this regard, we urge the international community to provide generous humanitarian assistance to the people of Liberia.

The situation in southern Africa remains a source of serious concern to us in the region.

In South Africa, despite some progress made so far, much still remains to be done to realize the objectives of the United Nations Declaration on Apartheid and its Destructive Consequences in Southern Africa. Thus, the

(Mr. Wonani, Zambia)

system of apartheid still remains intact. To date no negotiations between the regime and the representatives of the oppressed people leading to the adoption of a non-racial and democratic constitution have taken place. This is the most urgent and pressing issue to be addressed.

A climate conducive to such negotiations is yet to be created. In this regard we note with great concern that several hundreds of known political prisoners are still being held in contravention of the United Nations Declaration. Furthermore, the recent confirmation by the South African regime of its collusion with, and funding of, the Inkatha Freedom Party casts serious doubts on its declared commitment and intentions to negotiate in good faith towards the dismantling of the apartheid system. In view of these developments, there is still a need to maintain international pressure in order to encourage the regime to work genuinely towards the negotiation and adoption of a new constitution.

(Mr. Wonani, Zambia)

My delegation welcomes the recent agreement between the Government of Angola and UNITA. We express our sincere hope that this development will lead to the restoration of peace, stability and unity in that friendly neighbouring country.

With regard to Mozambique, however, despite the Government's good intentions to engage in negotiations with RENAMO in good faith in order to bring peace to that country, RENAMO has continued its acts of violence against the population and government installations. We hope that RENAMO will soon realize that an opportunity now exists for peace in that country so that the Mozambican people as a whole can usefully exert their efforts towards economic development. We appeal to all those who have leverage over RENAMO to urge it to show a sense of seriousness of purpose in the negotiations.

The prevailing international economic situation remains precarious for most developing countries. As a consequence, there is a marked deterioration in standards of living and the human condition in the majority of countries. It is the view of my delegation that this unfavourable situation will persist in the absence of sincere efforts to establish a new international economic order, an order based on democracy, justice, equity, equality and fair play in international economic relations.

The democratization of international economic relations has now become more imperative in view of the rapid political changes taking place in the world today. It is evident from the dramatic changes in the world that there is a universal desire for the institution of democracy, including protection and promotion of human rights. This universal desire must effect sound management of the environment and distribution of the world's scarce resources and ensure equitable participation in international economic decision-making.

(Mr. Wonani, Zambia)

The field of international economic relations is beset with numerous and complex global problems.

First and foremost are the twin problems of development and the environment. The current negotiations for international instruments and agreements to facilitate sustainable development are, indeed, a challenge of unparalleled importance.

The obligation to cooperate, an important message of the Brundtland Report, is being put to the ultimate test. Official and individual behaviour is being called upon to rise above self-interest and policies of a bygone era. Thus we must all lend our support to an early, equitable and satisfactory solution of the problems of the environment and development.

The present conditions of both the environment and development are untenable. This is clearly recognized in the present state of preparations for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, be it in the climate change and biodiversity negotiations or in the Preparatory Committee itself.

My delegation wishes to underline the need to comply with the obligation to cooperate. The international community must not settle for the lowest common denominator - preserving the world's forests - without initiating changes in unsustainable patterns of production and consumption and while avoiding answering the legitimate questions of developing countries on new and additional financial resources and non-commercial access to environmentally sound technologies.

For the Conference on Environment and Development to be successful the remaining phase of the preparatory process must involve enhanced efforts to agree on an ambitious, wide-ranging package that meets the challenges of sustainable development. Time is of the essence.

(Mr. Wonani, Zambia)

Another major problem besetting the world economy is the external debt of the developing countries. The problem still calls for a comprehensive, satisfactory solution to be found urgently. It is disappointing that legitimate calls for meaningful debt reduction have received countercalls for repeated reschedulings. Reschedulings are at best stopgap measures.

The international community must commit itself to addressing the issues surrounding the external debt problem of developing countries. By so doing, we shall be in a better position to shape the agenda that would lay the groundwork for the emergence of conditions of real growth and sustainable development in developing countries. For nobody can realistically expect the developing countries to enhance their savings potential when they have continuously to transfer their scarce financial resources to developed countries. Nor should the dynamism of the international financial system also be dependent on net transfers of financial resources from the developing countries. In its present configuration, the external debt of developing countries discourages initiative and achievement and breeds instead a sense of misfortune and frustration.

It is all very clear now that, in order to be sustained, the prevailing wave of political liberalization needs to be firmly anchored on universal economic liberalization. It is therefore disquieting to see some parts of the world, including developing countries, liberalize their economies on an unprecedented scale while some parts are firmly entrenched in impenetrable protectionism. Is it not an anomaly that those who preach free markets and win converts in the process should continue to fetter their markets?

(Mr. Wonani, Zambia)

The success of the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations depends on a meeting of minds on universal economic liberalization. This calls for urgent and meaningful concessions by developed countries, especially in the key areas of market access, agriculture, services and intellectual property all taken together.

The question of reform of the global financial and monetary institutions, notably the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, is as valid today as when it was first raised. Very few people doubt that the Bretton Woods institutions have simply been marginalized. Even those institutions feel the challenge to their relevance.

In addition, the stringent conditions attached to structural adjustment programmes championed by these institutions are unsustainable, particularly for many of our weak, vulnerable and dependent economies. Therefore, there is need for substantial reflection by these institutions on the current design and implementation of their structural adjustment programme.

(Mr. Wonani, Zambia)

Another area requiring urgent attention is the structure and process of decision-making in the Bretton Woods institutions. In this regard we view with concern the fact that the Group of 7 has arrogated to itself some of the critical powers of these institutions on the governance of the world economy and, to some extent, some issues on the United Nations agenda. This has been done to the detriment of the developing countries.

It is thus imperative that the Group of 7 should effectively address itself to the serious problem of relevance facing the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank as well as the wider question of democratic governance of the world economy. At the same time, it is incumbent upon the United Nations, in the spirit of enhancing multilateralism, seriously to address both these questions, which directly affect the effectiveness of these institutions, in terms of the delivery of their services.

Let me take this auspicious occasion to reiterate my country's article of faith in the principles and purposes of the United Nations. Clearly, more than ever before, the United Nations remains the only institution through which multilateral dialogue can take place in a truly democratic manner. We must, therefore, work towards strengthening the Organization politically and financially in order to make it more responsive to the needs of its Members. As we talk of collective security, which encompasses political, economic, environmental and human rights dimensions, among others, the quest for shared leadership and mutual responsibility becomes all the more imperative. These can be realized only through the United Nations.

Mr. BERENGER (Mauritius): Mr. President, it is indeed a pleasure for me to associate myself with previous speakers in congratulating you on your election to the high office of the presidency of the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly. Your election is a tribute not only to you but also

(Mr. Berenger, Mauritius)

to your great country, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, whose role in world affairs is crucial, especially in the region from which you hail. Your assumption of office comes at a time when our Organization is poised to gain a greater say in the management of world affairs. I should like at the outset to say that my country subscribes unreservedly to the view that the United Nations should assume broader responsibilities in global governance and must be given the financial, legal and political means to do so. We are confident that with your long political experience and extensive diplomatic skills you will provide welcome guidance and leadership to our deliberations in a period of global changes, which, however, remain fraught with uncertainties.

Your predecessor, Mr. de Marco of the island State of Malta, deserves our unreserved admiration and appreciation for the effective and wise manner in which he steered the United Nations General Assembly through a trying period. His contribution towards the strengthening of the Organization is highly commendable. During his term of office his initiatives in bringing the process of revitalization of the economic sector of the Organization to the forefront created a timely momentum for reform in an era when the United Nations is enjoying regained prestige.

I should also like to extend our warmest welcome and felicitations to the Governments and peoples of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Republic of Korea, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Marshall Islands and the Baltic States of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania on their accession to membership of the United Nations.

Permit me here to say a special word in respect of the two Koreas. The path to the seats they proudly occupy in this family of Nations has been long, arduous and often trying but they have found it possible to look far beyond

(Mr. Berenger, Mauritius)

and to act in accordance with the changing pattern of the times. Let me formulate the fervent wish of my Government and of the people of Mauritius to see them united, in the not too distant future, in accordance with the wish of their peoples.

If our Organization is held in renewed respect today, it is in great part due to the ceaseless efforts of the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, who, during the final tense years of the cold-war era, managed to keep vital channels of communication open in many areas of conflict and confrontation. As Mr. Perez de Cuellar arrives at the end of his second term we wish to tell him how grateful we all are for the excellent manner in which he has discharged his not always gratifying duties during his term of office. We wish him well in his future endeavours.

As we become engaged in the task of selecting the right man to step to the helm of the Organization, it would perhaps be proper to remind ourselves that ours is a new era and that the first few steps therein have already been taken. The new Secretary-General will therefore have to tackle a different agenda and face new challenges as we move closer to the twenty-first century. At a time when one of the major concerns of mankind is to bridge the gap between the rich North and the poor South, it is fitting that the new Secretary-General should be a personality of the South and indeed from the African continent. It would perhaps have been more judicious for our continent to present one candidate but let us say that the multitude of candidates it has presented is an indication of the winds of change that have of late been blowing across the world. Be that as it may, the Organization deserves the best, for the challenges ahead are daunting and will require from our choice an elevated degree of excellence.

(Mr. Berenger, Mauritius)

The attributes of the Secretary-General will require our attention. In effect, the present international context should enable the Secretary-General to assume greater autonomy and authority on any matter which may constitute a threat to the maintenance of international peace and security. He should be allowed to play a more active role in crisis-monitoring and preventive diplomacy, with the support and cooperation of the Security Council in accordance with Article 99 of the Charter, and thus enhance the effectiveness of the United Nations in dealing with international security problems and threats to peace, whether by mediation, enforcement measures or peace-keeping operations.

At the same time, judicicus action is required to set in motion a reform programme for the Organization. Besides the support which the reform should provide for the expanding nature of the Secretariat's activities, the changes should also be such as to satisfy the aspirations of all Member States and be representative of their interests, particularly at the level of the Security Council.

The changing pattern of our times demands that such a reform be undertaken to consolidate the essential role of the United Nations in international issues, in the same way as the Non-Aligned Movement is readjusting itself to better address the challenges that face the world today. Its importance is crucial.

(Mr. Berenger, Mauritius)

Foremost among those challenges, in the view of my delegation, is the one issue on which global peace and security hinge - disarmament - an issue which, until very recently, some had the tendency to relegate to a lesser priority. However, like others who have preceded me in this Assembly, I hold the view that disarmament should continue to occupy the forefront of our concerns and not be pushed to a back-seat position. Disarmament is not an easy objective, but it is one that demands reinvigorated attention, one that calls for new thinking and fresh initiatives, like indeed those we have had the immense pleasure in witnessing these past few days.

Here I would like to pay special tribute to the Plan of Action proposed by the late and sorely missed Rajiv Gandhi to the Third United Nations Special Session on Disarmament in June 1988, advocating a calendar of actions that would have culminated in the elimination of all nuclear weapons in 22 years from then, that is, effectively in the year 2010.

I should also like to recall the fillip given to the process of disarmament by President Mitterrand last June, when he rightly stressed in his plan for global disarmament the need for new thinking regarding the nuclear-weapons board in response to the events overrunning the world. His call then for the formulation of new rules to guarantee global security should not be left unheeded.

And then, in these last few days, this issue has been given a breath of fresh air by the courageous and highly commendable announcement by President Bush. His initiatives to reduce the nuclear weaponry of the United States are built on a new defence strategy that, as he himself put it, shifts the focus of the United States away from the prospect of global confrontation. No sooner had this significant and most positive stride been

(Mr. Berenger, Mauritius)

made than it was matched by an equally formidable announcement made by President Gorbachev last week-end, which clearly demonstrated that a turning-point in the peace process had been reached. With this good news for the whole world, as President Bush put it, we fervently hope that in the days to come further events will confirm that a disarmament race is now on. These announcements, coming so soon after the recent historic, although limited, START agreement has indeed rekindled the flame of hope in one and all, and this is why we insist that the disarmament issue should continue to occupy a prominent place on our agenda.

More than anything else, three recent events this year had helped to strengthen my conviction in this regard even before President Bush and President Gorbachev had made their initiatives known to the world.

Firstly, never since the Second World War has the threat of regional nuclear conflagration been so much in the realm of reality as during the Gulf war. At that time, we learned in a very matter-of-fact manner that nuclear warheads from cruise missiles that had been off-loaded at Clark air base in the Philippines had to be shipped out through Subic Bay naval base in all urgency as Mount Pinatubo erupted violently, and not only sounded the death-knell for the air base, but also made a nuclear accident more than a remote possibility.

And, even more recently, during the unfurling of the dramatic and tense events in the Soviet Union, when a group of ill-advised persons tried to halt and indeed reverse the march of history, doubt was expressed as to whether control over the Soviet nuclear weaponry was still in the rightful hands. International peace and stability appeared to rest with a group of adventurers, as President Gorbachev and President Yeltsin of Russia termed the perpetrators of the failed coup attempt in the Soviet Union.

(Mr. Berenger, Mauritius)

Clearly, the world needs to be reassured that it can lead its God-given life fully and not be held to ransom by possible man-made disasters. And that is why, while we welcome most heartily President Mitterrand's call for a meeting of the four nuclear Powers that have a presence in Europe, we believe it is equally important that the nuclear arms reduction talks should involve, as soon as possible, all five permanent members of the Security Council, and that they fix as their goal complete nuclear disarmament. That goal is indeed already provided for in the preambles to both the 1963 partial test ban Treaty and the 1970 nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

In the same breath, let us commit ourselves not to take the nuclear arms race into outer space. Already, we shudder at the mere thought of so many nuclear warheads dispersed across our planet. Let us therefore contain ourselves and not export into space what we pride ourselves in calling our mastery of scientific technology, but which can as well be described as our propensity to self-destruction.

While on the subject of disarmament, may I refer again to that most important pillar of the present nuclear non-proliferation regime, the NPT, which will come up for renewal in 1995. My delegation takes great satisfaction in the knowledge that at long last both France and China have declared their intention to accede to the Treaty, and we commend them for this commitment, the more so as France stated in this very forum only a few days ago that it will deposit the necessary instrument of adhesion before this year is out.*

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* Mr. Ghezal (Tunisia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Berenger, Mauritius)

Nearer Mauritius, South Africa, Tanzania and Zambia have already acceded to the Treaty. But then, our concerns over the loopholes in the Treaty have been further accentuated by the evidence brought to light recently in Iraq, confirming the fact that certain countries continue to contravene their treaty and safeguards obligations in order to embark on a hidden agenda of nuclear activities. My appeal is that we should all strive hard to plug all loopholes and to give the Treaty the non-discriminatory universality it calls for. To that end, the Assembly will recall that Mauritius has proposed, together with Egypt, an informal dialogue between the States parties and the States not parties to the NPT before it comes up for renewal in 1995. We should, however, like to appeal urgently to set the ball in motion as of now. We cannot afford to waste any time.

Impassioned as we are with the objective of complete nuclear disarmament, my country, Mauritius, has also proposed a South-West Indian Ocean and Southern Africa Nuclear-Free-Zone Treaty along the lines of the 1985 South Pacific Nuclear-Free-Zone Treaty. Already, we have obtained the full support of some of the countries directly involved in the area identified, among which I should like to mention Zimbabwe, Madagascar, Seychelles and the Comoros. Mauritius looks forward to discussing this proposal soon with post-apartheid South Africa. While the declaration of nuclear-free-zones per se is no universal panacea to the ills that are engendered by nuclear weapons, it is our firm belief that such momentum in the creation of these zones around the world, for example, in the Middle East, in our region and in the Korean peninsula, is conducive to global security, which remains our ultimate goal.

As regards chemical weapons, my delegation supports the views already expressed here to the effect that every effort should be undertaken to meet

(Mr. Berenger, Mauritius)

the target date of 1992 for the completion of a comprehensive chemical weapons treaty. In this context, I should like to endorse Australia's proposal for a meeting of the Geneva Conference on Disarmament at the ministerial level so as to resolve outstanding issues and provide the impetus required for the negotiations.

I should also like to welcome the positive conclusions reached a few days ago in Geneva at the Third Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention. Such conclusive actions augur well for the future.

Finally, one last item on this issue that calls for our attention is the stockpiling and production of conventional weapons. Mauritius endorses the call for a register of sales of arms to be kept at the United Nations.

While we also subscribe to the call that the developing countries should reduce military budgets as appropriate, it is equally my strong view that the major arms-producing and developed countries should restrain their weapons production and likewise reduce their military spending. The peace dividend will increase and, on both counts, it will mean a release of funds and resources that can thus be channelled towards the economic and social well-being of those in need around the world.

(Mr. Berenger, Mauritius)

Earlier in my address, I stressed that we have entered a new era which requires new thinking and fresh initiatives in our collective quest for solutions to the problems that beset us. The environment of our planet has now become a major component of our national policies and indeed the subject of constant discussions at the international level. The splendour of our global environment cannot be gainsaid, yet its fragility is a universal heritage which must be managed for the benefit of mankind as a whole. Mauritius welcomes the various initiatives being taken, especially at the level of the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity, for the determination of actions to preserve our environment and to mobilize world public opinion about the dire need to do so.

However, as we prepare for the ambitious environment Conference in Brazil in 1992, let me sound a word of caution to those who are apt to place the blame for the degradation of our planet's environment mainly if not solely on the developing countries. And let it also be said that Mauritius appreciates the stand of those who believe that, in our endeavours to protect our planet's environment, after having played havoc with it for centuries, we should not embark on extremes and adopt such stringent measures as will jeopardize economic development. There is therefore a concerted effort to be made. A level of solidarity and political will, more than has hitherto been displayed, will have to emerge to enable the developing countries to match a universal commitment to save our environment. Our quest for a clean and beautiful environment will necessarily demand a change in our behavioural patterns, whether on the economic, social or political plane, or at the individual or national level.

(Mr. Berenger, Mauritius)

I need not repeat that my country's concerns for the preservation of the environment encompass the absolute necessity of ensuring that nothing is done that will continue to bring about the ecological deterioration of our coastal areas and our oceans, which provide a means of livelihood to millions of people across the world. Indeed, we should show no mercy to those who irresponsibly and deliberately pollute our planet on land, at sea or in space.

We have witnessed that collective action in many fields bears positive results, no matter how tough the problems may appear. Similarly, on the economic front, it is my country's firm belief that concerted action between the North and the South is imperative if the developing South can ever aspire to emerge from the economic morass in which it has been struggling for ever so long. For let us not forget that economic stability is also a fundamental prerequisite of global security. The debt-ridden countries need to be given more than a breathing space. Yet again, some new thinking will have to go into how best to bridge the gap between the rich North and the poor South.

When one talks of debt, the main focus of attention automatically turns to Africa. The plight of millions of our brothers and sisters on that continent can be described as one of gloom if not yet of doom. The breakthrough in food production that was expected during the 1980s has eluded Africa. Population has continued to grow despite some courageous attempts at initiating population control programmes and at sensitizing African public opinion to the burden an unbridled population growth imposes on the economy. The United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development has not lived up to expectations. The 1980s have indeed been a lost decade for Africa.

(Mr. Berenger, Mauritius)

What then needs to be done? Or, to look at it from another angle, has everything that needs to be done been done? Is it sufficient for us to participate in conferences and seminars and go back home happy to have made a resounding speech or indeed content with the fact that we have placed the blame for our problems squarely at the feet of others? Indeed no. Our intentions and pronouncements need to be translated into concrete action. We owe it to future generations to leave behind a world free from want, a world free from disease, a world where peace, liberty, social justice and economic well-being will be the basic ingredients of life.

I believe that it is within our grasp to achieve this kind of world. All we need to do is to look to ourselves and start by taking the bold steps that the circumstances dictate. While the rich North should act beyond its present commitment to alleviate the burden of the South, the developing countries should start by cleaning their doorsteps and putting their houses in order. Economic waste and corruption need to be eradicated. Debtor States need to have the courage to implement economic reforms and to strive for the most efficient management of their resources. My country believes that, in this respect as well, the United Nations can play a fundamental role in harnessing all the ideas and possibilities that abound for improving the situation.

On the political front, the innovative operations pioneered over a year ago during the elections in Namibia have set the pace for United Nations involvement in other parts of the globe. The United Nations has made positive contributions, particularly in Central America, Afghanistan and Cambodia. It is now engaged in preparing a referendum in Western Sahara, where Mauritius, along with other Member States, is honoured to have been given the opportunity to serve the cause of peace and democracy. Mauritius will not hesitate to

(Mr. Berenger, Mauritius)

condemn any attempt to forestall the implementation of the United Nations plan of action for Western Sahara.

Talking of democracy brings me to the fact that we in Mauritius, less than a month ago, went to the polls for the fifth time since our independence in 1968. If I venture to mention this here, it is to emphasize how we in Mauritius are firm believers in the process of democracy, a system the shortcomings of which are negligible in the face of the multifarious advantages it brings to the people in the conduct of State affairs and indeed in the economic well-being of our nation globally. We are staunch proponents of the philosophy that there is no meaningful and fruitful development without democracy. And I would like to make so bold as to appeal to those of our sister nations which are still hesitant about the democratic adventure not to resist the thrust of history but rather to give it a try and enjoy its thrills. The system has worked marvellously well in my country and elsewhere. There is no reason why it should not bear the same fruits universally. With it comes the added dividend of peace.

The end of the cold war has created new opportunities for the resolution of conflicts in which the United Nations will be associated in one way or another. We are pleased to see that Cambodia has resumed its seat in the General Assembly and that one of the long-standing regional conflicts may soon, we hope, be resolved under the aegis of the United Nations.

With this trend of successes, it is but highly desirable that our Organization be allowed to play its rightful role in the Middle East peace process. I have no doubt in my mind that the United Nations will play a catalytic role in bringing about a just and peaceful solution to the area and thus, on the one hand, alleviate the plight of the Palestinian people, and on the other resolve the security problems of the region.

(Mr. Berenger, Mauritius)

I must commend here the untiring and ceaseless efforts being deployed by the United States to bring all parties concerned to the conference table. The position of Mauritius is very clear. We recognize the right of Israel to exist within secure boundaries just as we uphold the struggle of the Palestinians for a State of their own. In this regard we have noted with satisfaction the decision of the Palestinian National Council for effective Palestinian participation in the peace process. Genuine Palestinian representation in this process cannot but be conclusive. In keeping with the evolution of the situation, Mauritius is prepared to go along with a move to rescind resolution 3379 (XXX) equating zionism with racism on the strict understanding that the Palestinian people's right to statehood be recognized and that Arab lands are not "up for grabs" in the name of any expansionist ideology. It will indeed be to the credit of the leaders of the region to sit at the conference table alongside the other interested parties and the United Nations and to remove from the international agenda the major remaining area of tension and conflict.

Similarly, my delegation will continue to support all moves by our Organization aimed at finding an equitable solution to the Cyprus issue in strict respect of its sovereignty.

(Mr. Berenger, Mauritius)

The issue of sovereignty brings me to the fact that Mauritius is itself still struggling to regain its sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago, a cause which I believe should be supported by the Assembly in its entirety, considering the stand taken by the world community in the recent Gulf Crisis on, precisely, an issue of sovereignty. With the advent of the new era to which I have already referred, it should be possible for the past colonial Power to come to terms with the present situation and acknowledge the sovereignty of Mauritius over the Chagos Archipelago. It is also the fervent wish of my Government that nothing should be done by any party concerned to aggravate this issue any further, especially as concerns the extension of territorial waters.

At the same time, let me reiterate the faith of my Government in the efforts being made by the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean for the convening of a United Nations Conference on the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace. In this respect my delegation would like to place on record its deep appreciation for the selfless dedication and untiring determination of the Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka. The prominent role played by this sister-island State in such a laudable venture is all the more appreciated considering that it is itself caught in an unfortunate web of violence which continues to take its toll of human lives in the conflict involving the Tamil minority. My Government hopes that a peaceful political solution to the problem will be found very soon.

Nearer us, in South Africa, Mauritius welcomes the recent peace accord signed by the De Klerk Government, the African National Congress of South Africa (ANC), Inkatha and others to curb violence in the country. In effect,

(Mr. Berenger, Mauritius)

we see this move as a major step forward towards an end to the ongoing violence thereby creating the right conditions for the ultimate eradication of apartheid. Mauritius expects President de Klerk to do everything possible to stop this violence and ensure the impartiality of the security forces

I should like to stress that the major event we in Mauritius expect to take place shortly in South Africa is the multiparty Conference which will pave the way for a post-apartheid constitution. Mauritius will establish full diplomatic relations with South Africa once a post-apartheid constitution will have been adopted, and we believe that this should be sooner rather than later.

But is it not a paradox that at a time when apartheid is being dismantled at one end of the world, a constitution with racist attributes unfortunately continues to prevail in Fiji? Mauritius has no intention to interfere in the internal affairs of any State and it is not in our habit to do so. However, at the risk of sounding self-praising, let me say that Mauritius is a multiracial country where everyone has his rightful place under the sun and where everyone enjoys his civic rights indiscriminately. This harmony works wonders for our prosperity. We believe the same could be achieved in Fiji and we would therefore like to appeal to our brothers there to redress the situation by amending the present Constitution as required and in a manner that would no longer warrant the boycott by any political force of general elections. Fiji, this otherwise gem of an island in the Pacific, owes it to itself and to its image to rectify its path and make it possible for us to welcome Fiji anew and with open arms in such forums as the Commonwealth.

There still remain, across the world, quite a few pockets of tension and conflicts. It is the hope of Mauritius that peace will be brought to bear in

(Mr. Berenger, Mauritius)

such places as Mozambique, with which Mauritius so proudly has blood relations, and the countries in the Horn of Africa, so that resources, both human and material, could be fully geared towards their economic advancement.

I cannot close this chapter without adding the voice of Mauritius to those who have condemned in the strongest possible terms, the coup d'état perpetrated by the army in Haiti and appealing to those responsible to restore the country to its legitimate rulers.

In all the political issues I have just mentioned, an active role can be perceived for the United Nations. Some would dispute such a view but since our Organization is being called upon to assume greater importance in a changing international environment and an increasingly interdependent world, the extent of its new role should be reassessed, inasmuch as we are prepared to challenge the established doctrines of power politics - which have dictated so far how global affairs were regulated - and consider a more appropriate framework for relations among nations.

Recent events in the Gulf have demonstrated that the United Nations remains the optimal recourse for restoring stability and peace. If indeed the end of the Cold War has brought about new identity of views and interests between major Powers, thus removing the greatest obstacles to global cooperation, then the ability of the United Nations to promote peace and security through collective measures should be strengthened.

The stage has been set for such a course of action to be taken. I believe that time is of the essence and we should act accordingly.

Mr. KAMIKAMICA (Fiji): On behalf of the delegation of the Republic of Fiji, I should like to congratulate Ambassador Samir Shihabi on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session. We are confident that his long experience and well-known diplomatic

(Mr. Kamikamica, Fiji)

skills will ensure a successful outcome to this important session. Following the momentous events in the Middle East, Eastern Europe and elsewhere over the past year, there is a need for healing and reconciliation as never before, a role for which he is eminently qualified. In his important responsibilities, my delegation pledges him our full support and cooperation.

His Excellency, Mr. Guido de Marco, deserves our thanks and appreciation for the dynamic manner in which he guided the work of the last session. He demonstrated untiring patience and thoroughness in seeking new methods to rationalize and reform the Organization. We trust that the momentum of his work will be carried forward. We take this opportunity to wish him all success in the new role which his nation, Malta, will assign to him in the future.

This year brings to an end the tenure in office of Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar. My delegation joins others in congratulating him on a job well done and extends the support of Fiji to his successor.

I should like to extend a warm and cordial welcome to all seven new Members of the Organization and especially the two from the Pacific - the Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of the Marshall Islands. Having participated actively in their decolonization process, my delegation is gratified at this final expression of their coming of age.

It is a matter of great pleasure for us to join others in seeing both the Koreas as Members of the Organization. Their entry highlights the values which have come increasingly to dominate world thinking - dialogue, cooperation and accommodation. This trend is most encouraging and we urge all nations in conflict to use these attributes in place of armed conflict.

(Mr. Kamikamica, Fiji)

The dramatic changes in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe have at last enabled a half-century-old wrong to be righted. We congratulate Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania on the success of their courageous struggle for self-determination and for their admittance to membership of the United Nations.

The International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism is the final countdown during which we hope to see efforts focused on the achieving of self-determination by the remaining 18 Non-Self-Governing Territories. The people of those Territories must exercise their inalienable right to choose their futures free from any outside interference. We must honour their choice, be it independence, integration, free association or any other acceptable outcome of a legitimate act of self-determination. Fiji particularly looks forward to the results of the 1998 referendum in New Caledonia and will pay close attention to all preparatory acts that lead up to that event. This includes close monitoring of the actual progress of the various phases of the programme of action agreed to be undertaken under the Matignon Accords.

The events of last August in the Soviet Union sent out waves of trepidation to the four corners of the globe. We were heartened to see the success of the forces for greater freedom and transparency. We join others in expressing the hope that glasnost and perestroika will go from strength to strength.

The political developments in South Africa can, we trust, be built upon and accelerated to dismantle apartheid and allow all the people to have an equal say in the running of their government in their homeland. We commend the members of the African National Congress for their patience and fortitude

(Mr. Kamikamica, Fiji)

throughout the years and look forward to the day when their dreams and aspirations will become a reality.

The enormous toll on human suffering and material devastation caused by the Gulf War is a severe indictment on those who precipitated the crisis. Such conflicts have no place in this day and age. Today, efforts to alleviate the suffering and reconstruction are being hampered by the non-cooperative stance of certain nations.

It is our hope that the final outcome will take into account the needs of everyone, including those of the long-suffering Kurds. The Gulf crisis has clearly demonstrated that the United Nations can respond speedily and effectively to any internatlonal conflict, but the process by which this responsibility is exercised must be worked out very carefully.

A major security concern of small States was made manifest in the invasion of Kuwait. Size, economic well-being and geographical location have not deterred potential aggressors. However, those factors and political expediency have in the past dictated the way the international community has responded to such acts of aggression. Small island States are particularly vulnerable under these circumstances, where their isolation and a lack of economic and strategic value favours the aggressor. We therefore believe that the response of the United Nations and the international community should not be slowed down or obscured by such factors.

We welcome the proposed Middle East peace conference and the role of the United States in facilitating the promotion of discussions on the long-outstanding problems and finding solutions that can bring peace and stability to the region. We believe that all parties affected should participate and should address the two major issues of a homeland for the

(Mr. Kamikamica, Fiji)

Palestinian people and the recognition of the rights of all States, including Israel, to an existence safe from threats to their territorial integrity.

We are much encouraged by the positive manner in which the Government of Lebanon has expanded its authority to regain sovereignty over all its territory. We call upon Lebanon's neighbours to assist it every step of the way to promote the establishment of a new order that can bring to an end the sad history of civil unrest and misery which for far too long has been passed off as intractable. We believe that all foreign military forces, including the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), should have no reason to remain in the country and should withdraw when Lebanon assumes control of its own affairs and UNIFIL's mandate is seen by all the parties to have been fulfilled.

UNIFIL is one of the 10 current peace-keeping operations that the Organization has spread out across the globe. United Nations peace-keeping operations, which have played a major role in many areas of tension, are expanding their scope to include conflict resolution and the mounting of missions new to their traditional agenda. The United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO), which was established to play a supervisory role, is one such operation, and the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) will break new ground. Notable among the Organization's recent peace-keeping achievements is the success it has enjoyed in electoral assistance. The United Nations responses to requests from Nicaragua and Haiti have contributed enormously to the successful outcome of the electoral processes in those two countries. That experience, we believe, should be readily available to all Members on request, provided that the Governments making such requests have the backing of the majority of the population.

(Mr. Kamikamica, Fiji)

The good will and efforts of the Organization in peace-keeping amount to nought without reciprocal action by the host country to mirror efforts. We urge all parties to conflicts to demonstrate the good will necessary to produce good results. The success of such operations is also dependent to a large extent on the financial support of the Members of the Organization, whom we urge to ensure that their assessed contributions are paid in full and on time. The UNIFIL cumulative assessed shortfall as of 31 July 1991 of $297.6 million is illustrative of the unsatisfactory manner in which these payments are being met and, as the Secretary-General has repeatedly pointed out, imposes an unfair burden on those supplying peace-keeping forces.

While we appreciate the heavy burden of responsibilities the United Nations is asked to bear in all fields, we also wish to associate ourselves with those who believe that the time has now come when the Organization needs to examine more closely its current range and method of operations with a view to reducing duplication of work by its various organs and agencies. At a time when national governments are finding that operational funds and resources are becoming increasingly scarce, it is incumbent on the membership to see how the multifarious operations of the United Nations can be further rationalized. Important changes and economies have already been instituted by the Secretary-General, but these need strengthening and reinforcing so thal more resources are available at the operational level to make a real impact on the lives and welfare of those in need.

Next year the Earth summit in Brazil brings to a culmination the considerable amount of effort being undertaken to harmonize human activity with the need to safeguard the environment. My country supports the excellent work being done in many countries on the conservation of the environment and

(Mr. Kamikamica, Fiji)

on sustainable development. Left unchecked, the effects of global warming would be disastrous. The melting ice caps would cause sea levels to rise and many Pacific island nations could be wiped out completely. Climatic changes would also alter weather patterns and more floods and droughts will occur. Fiji looks forward to tangible and effective controls being agreed upon at the Earth summit so that future generations can be protected before it is too late.

(Mr. Kamikamica, Fiji)

In our own way, environmental management programmes have been started in Fiji. In order to ensure a continuous supply of timber and to help minimize the "greenhouse effect" our reforestation programme has been expanded. Introductory work on the better management of our watersheds is being undertaken. Environment impact studies are insisted upon for all major development projects to ensure that negative consequences are eliminated. The Brazil Conference and the ultimate "Agenda 21" will provide both the guidelines and the means for the future, which should be adhered to by all of us.

While no one can deny that the question of the environment is an issue that must concern everyone, we maintain that much of the degradation that is with us now is the result of excessive and uncontrolled practices of the industrialized nations, and they should bear the burden of overcoming this problem; and ways should also be found to compensate the developing countries when they are asked to surrender a source of their income because of some imposed boycott.

Nevertheless, as charity begins at home, it is incumbent upon the developing countries to be vigilant and to ensure that in their quest for development they do not inadvertently overlook the environmental management aspects of their programmes.

Limited natural land resources means that the major drive for the future economic development for Fiji and other Pacific island countries must come from our seas and oceans. The reefs and the near-shore resources in the heavily populated areas are already overfished. The tuna resources in our region are considered to be adequate to support the economic growth of the small islands for years to come, provided they are economically utilized by the people themselves. However, the widespread use of driftnet fishing has

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caused overfishing beyond maximum sustainable yields. We urge support for the proposed moratorium in all regions of the world on all large-scale driftnet fishing on the high seas by June 1992.

We also continue to note with concern the ongoing attempts to convert our region into a dumping ground for toxic and hazardous wastes. The alarm sounded by the Pacific nations about the chemical destruction facility at Johnston Atoll elicited a commitment from the United States to keep us informed of its operations and to close the facility on completion of the destruction of weapons being transferred from Europe. We hope that this dialogue will continue and that the facilities are not used again once the present stockpiles are destroyed.

This cooperation by a major Power gives us assurance that future talks on matters of mutual interest will receive attention. We must, however, also mention our disappointment at the continued nuclear tests in our region by France, despite repeated calls for them to stop. In this regard, we would like to echo the words of Mr. Bailey Olter, President of the Federated States of Micronesia and current Chairman of the South Pacific Forum, when, in addressing the Assembly on 26 September, he said:

> "We still await, however, a cessation of their testing of nuclear weapons in our region. As Forum Chairman, I cannot overstress the determination of all the members to persevere with ... our efforts to reach the consciences of those who seem willing to visit the potentially devastating consequences of nuclear testing on faraway island people but are unwilling to carry out such activities within their own homelands." (A/46/PV.5, pp. 7 and 8-10)

(Mr. Kamikamica, Fiji)

Our concerns on this matter are very real for a very good primary reason, which is: we live there.

The recently announced initiative by President Bush further to reduce nuclear weapons represents a significant change in United States nuclear strategy. We commend his bold action and welcome the positive response by President Gorbachev. This should be emulated by all the nuclear Powers.

Fiji went through a period of political turbulence in 1987 and an Interim Government was appointed and assigned to restore the economy and to formulate a new Constitution. The economy has been restored, and we acknowledge the support extended by many nations and international organizations. We have been able to find additional markets and make new trading arrangements. The economy has been deregulated, with emphasis on exports. Tax-free zones were introduced, attracting substantial foreign investment. New industries were established, creating many new employment opportunities. More goods were produced and exported so trade revived. It is no exaggeration to say that the economy rebounded to record levels, thereby achieving the first objective.

After lengthy and extensive consultations with all component groups throughout the country, a new Constitution was promulgated on 25 July 1990. The redefinition of electoral boundaries has been completed. Registration of voters is progressing well, with elections scheduled for March 1992.

The last four years have been difficult for my country. No change is easy to accept; there will be detractors and there will be those who wish to retain the old system. We have consistently stated that the solutions to our problems will have to be found from within. Outside interference and unsolicited advice do not help. We would like to thank our friends who have given us understanding and who have stood by us in our time of need. Next

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year a Government elected by the people will assume office to guide our affairs and help us embark on a new chapter of our history.

The uncertainties in the global economic environment create a great deal of concern to developing countries. These countries need assistance to develop their economic bases and to find markets for goods produced. They must export to prosper, but they meet numerous hurdles in trying to gain access to markets in the industrialized economies. Non-tariff barriers remain a major impediment to freer trade. Subsidies paid by developed countries to their farmers seriously undermine the ability of developing countries to gain more lucrative and stable markets. Attempts by various groups during the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade negotiations to ease these subsidies have met with strong opposition.

At the same time, the continuing damage to the interests of countries caused by the failure of the multilateral system to deal effectively with the trade distorting impact of agricultural subsidies underlines the need for urgent reform. Despite repeated attempts to reduce support, transfers to agriculture by way of direct payments and consumer transfers to countries of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development had increased by 12 per cent in 1990 to $299 billion. The Uruguay Round must be brought to a substantive conclusion and provide a proper basis for a more liberalized international trading system. This liberalization, in itself, would assist greatly in strengthening the economies of member countries.

Closer to home, the island-developing countries, of which Fiji is one and which are widely recognized as the most fragile and vulnerable of all the developing countries, continue to find themselves in a particularly difficult position. There are over 20 island-developing countries and territories in

(Mr. Kamikamica, Fiji)

the Pacific subregion, scattered over an enormous geographical area. Most of them are small and some are tiny, both in their physical size and in population, and natural disasters are frequent occurrences. Four are within the least developed country category. Their links to the outside world are few and poorly developed; these links are highly expensive to maintain, but without them they could not survive. They are heavily dependent on outside sources for the supply of many essentials, having very few resources and negligible productive capacity themselves.

(Mr. Kamikamica, Fiji)

Reduction in development assistance will have serious economic repercussions for our island region, where many countries experience budget deficits. Although some have been able to reduce their deficits, the attempts of others have been handicapped by natural disasters, notably hurricanes and cyclones. If assistance is reduced, these deficits might rise further. Moreover, unpredictability in future aid flows will hamper the region's attempt to finance badly needed infrastructure development. This, in turn, might lead to a reduction of capital outlays and general economic decline. We hope that the commitment made by our traditional donors and various United Nations and non-governmental agencies will continue to help alleviate this decline so that these particularly disadvantaged countries can achieve a comfortable degree of economic self-sufficiency.

The United Nations has now laid plans to prepare itself for the next century: the 1992 Earth summit meeting, the decade to eradicate colonialism, and diversification of peace-keeping operations are but three significant items. All these will remain beacons to guide us for generations to come. They require the full support of everyone, to ensure their fulfilment. The United Nations remains the bastion of hope that its founders set it out to be, and Fiji remains committed to play whatever role the Organization may call upon it to perform.

Mr. SSEMOGERERE (Uganda): On behalf of the Ugandan delegation I wish to congratulate Ambassador Shihabi of Saudi Arabia on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session. His election to that high office is a tribute to his personal qualities and a reflection of the high esteem in which his country, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, is held. He brings to the office a wealth of experience and diplomatic skill which will be useful as the Assembly grapples with the major issues before this session.

(Mr. Ssemogerere, Uganda)

I assure him of the full cooperation of the Ugandan delegation in the discharge of his responsibilities.

To his predecessor, Mr. Guido de Marco, Foreign Minister of Malta, my delegation expresses its most sincere appreciation for the skill and dispatch with which he guided the deliberations of the forty-fifth session.

I wish to pay a well-deserved tribute to the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, for his exemplary service to the Organization. For the decade he has been at its helm, the Organization has faced great challenges, some of which brought into question its very relevance and viability. Because of his dedication, perseverance and insight, Secretary-General Perez de Cuellar, contributed substantially to the strengthening of this body and helped overcome many of those challenges. We are now all happy to note that the United Nations role as a focal point for harmonizing international actions, and as a repository for our collective efforts for peace, security and cooperation has been strengthened.

In Africa, we commend the Secretary-General for his untiring efforts and determination in helping to solve our problems; notably the critical economic situation in our region and the conflicts prevalent there.

Thanks to the Secretary-General's constant attention to our problems, Africa's hope and confidence in the United Nations remain solid and show every sign of growing stronger. In turn, Africa would like to believe that the international community regards it as a serious partner, mature enough to be entrusted with greater responsibilities. Here, I ask to be allowed to stress that the current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), Mr. Ibrahim Babangida, President of the Republic of Nigeria, spoke for all of us when he urged that the Security Council be restructured and that serious

(Mr. Ssemogerere, Uganda)

consideration be given to the election of an African to the post of Secretary-General of the United Nations.

Allow me to welcome the seven new Members to the United Nations. Uganda welcomes Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, which have just regained their independence. Since our independence, Uganda has had friendly and diplomatic relations with both the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea. We are therefore happy to see their joint admission to the United Nations. Together with the admissions of the Marshall Islands and Micronesia, the Organization has come closer to attaining its goal of universality.

In the past year, we have all witnessed the momentous changes that have led to a fundamental tranformation in international relations. The far-reaching developments in Eastern Europe have altered the political and economic terrain in which we have been operating. Indeed, so changed is the landscape that the international community is grappling with the construction of a new world order which, we hope, will usher in an era of cooperation, rather than confrontation and free the world from the narrow confines of ideological bloc mindset.

Understandably, there are great expectations as we look to the prospect of a new world order. The political and economic structures of many countries, and the nature of relations between countries, have evolved in ways that could not have been contemplated a few years ago. However, the prevailing sense of euphoria should not lull us into complacency. We still have a number of hurdles to cross. If we are to seize the opportunities beckoning us on the horizon, the leaders of this generation need, for their part, to have vision and a high degree of statesmanship. But they also need the attention and the support of the international community.

(Mr. Ssemogerere, Uganda)

The order to which we are aspiring can be viable only if it is, and is seen to be, just and equitable. It can be just and equitable only if its architecture and management are safely anchored in the precepts of the Charter. First, the new order will be on a firm foundation if it promotes, as the Charter dictates, fundamental human rights and conforms to the clear desire of mankind for peace, democracy and the rule of law, both within and between nations.

It is now pertinent for me to express Uganda's concern at the recent developments in Haiti, and to commend the initiative of the Organization of American States in a sincere effort to help restore democratic order in that country.

(Mr. Ssemogerere, Uganda)

Secondly, the new order should address the problem of the economic and social development of all countries. It therefore becomes imperative to address the glaringly visible gap between the North and the South, reflecting affluence on one hand and abject poverty and deprivation on the other.

A fundamental goal of the United Nations is to bring about the peaceful resolution of conflicts. Its efforts in that regard were long encumbered by the cold war, which more often than not fanned the flames of war in various regions. The conflicts in those regions made it attractive for massive quantities of sophisticated weapons to be transferred, by all camps, to fragile States and areas of tension in the third world. Arms transfers became lucrative business for the developed countries which have the technology and resources to produce weapons. The readiness of the developed countries to provide developing countries with armaments contrasts very sharply with their response to similar requests for the transfer of financial resources and technology for the purpose of development. It is our hope that, in the light of recent developments, that trend will be reversed and that our appeals for economic transformation will be responded to with vigour and imagination.

Many speakers have supported the proposal for a register of international transfers of conventional weapons. That proposal is appealing. In our view, for such a register to be meaningful it must be balanced and transparent. It must also cover the producer countries and provide a country-by-country inventory of all armaments produced, stockpiled or transferred. Furthermore, transparency should encompass information on state-of-the-art technology in the military field, as this would engender confidence and alleviate the fear of surprises. It should also be possible to set up an inspection mechanism for verification of such a register.

(Mr. Ssemogerere, Uganda)

We are happy to see that the opportunity presented by the relaxation of tension has been seized to advance the cause of disarmament. The agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union on the reduction of strategic arms is very encouraging. Equally encouraging were the announcement by President Bush on Friday, 27 September 1991, regarding further, unilateral, reductions in United States armaments and the recent reponse by President Gorbachev of the USSR. Taken together, those three achievements represent a major step forward and provide a timely impetus for the disarmament process.

We believe that further discussions should aim at even deeper reductions in nuclear arsenals and limit the qualitative improvement of such arsenals. Priorities in the disarmament field, in our view, should include negotiations on a comprehensive test-ban treaty, the speedy conclusion of a chemical-weapons convention and an increase in the effectiveness of the biological-weapons Convention. Given the momentum attained and the objectives aimed for, there is a strong case for urging that the resources released by disarmament be channelled to the development of the poor countries. The linkage between disarmament and development must remain in focus in our deliberations.

The international community has accorded human rights their rightful significance. This is proper because threats to peace and security do not arise only from external provocation and aggression. In a number of instances the underlying cause of tension is a failure to respect human rights. We also know that the violation of human rights contributes materially towards the burgeoning refugee problem in the third world. The Secretary-General, in his annual report, advises that the principle of non-interference in the essential jurisdiction of States cannot be regarded as a protective barrier behind which

(Mr. Ssemogerere, Uganda)

human rights could be massively or systematically violated with impunity. The same view has been articulated by many speakers in this debate. We agree. Human rights violations should be condemned and redressed wherever they are perpetrated. The international community has a vital role to play in this regard.

In order to assist the new generation of leaders who are committed to the democratization process and the defence of human rights, we need to be realistic and to advocate practical innovations which are capable of bringing about the necessary institutional changes peacefully; otherwise the whole process might abort due to institutional resistance. The situations in Haiti and, to a lesser extent, in Togo are cases in point.

Furthermore, we believe that if human rights and democracy are to be meaningful, it is critical that developing countries be assisted in attaining an adequate standard of living. Civil and political rights must go hand in hand with equally important economic, social and cultural rights. The international community has in the past been preoccupied with the progressive development of norms of human rights and the monitoring of their observance. While this is important, equal importance should be given to assisting developing countries to enhance their endogenous capacity to ensure the observance of those norms. For universal peace, security and respect of human rights to be safeguarded, it is an advantage also to have corresponding economic and social development.

Regrettably, the external environment for developing countries continues to be unfavourable. Resource flows in general have dwindled, commodity prices

(Mr. Ssemogerere, Uganda)

have tumbled and the external debt crisis has deepened, causing the predictable political and social hardships for the population in many of developing countries to worsen.

In most cases the main problem has not been the lack of programmes to address the issues, but rather the political will and commitment necessary to enable them to be fulfilled. This is the case with the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development, which was adopted by the General Assembly in 1986 and whose final review was undertaken last month by the Ad Hoc Committee of the General Assembly. In that regard, Uganda commends the tireless efforts of the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee, Mr. Martin Huslid, the Permanent Representative of Norway to the United Nations. While most African countries undertook structural adjustment programmes, the response of the international community fell short of expectations. Transfer of financial resources did not materialize as envisaged. Accordingly, the Programme of Action on the whole remains unimplemented while Africa's critical economic situation continues to deteriorate.

It is our hope that within the context of the proposed new agenda for Africa now before the General Assembly, the international community will show the required political will and provide the tangible support necessary for its renewal and implementation.

I wish to take this opportunity to welcome the initiative by the Government of Japan on the African economic summit proposed for 1993. It is our hope that an outcome of that summit will be serious commitments on the part of the international community for increased resource flows for the development of Africa.

(Mr. Ssemogerere, Uganda)

We recognize that the development of Africa is our primary responsibility and that others can only complement our efforts. As a strategy for development, regional cooperation and integration have assumed priority attention in Africa. To this end, the Treaty establishing the African Economic Community was adopted at the Abuja summit of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in June 1991. The Treaty is designed to expand our markets, create forward and backward linkages in our economies and hence act as a motor for Africa's growth and development on a sustained basis. The United Nations and the international community should be supportive of our integration efforts.

Because of our economic problems, we have had to adopt structural adjustment programmes which invariably involve deep cuts in expenditures on social programmes such as health and education, and the laying off of workers. This has had a direct negative impact on vulnerable groups who have in turn been forced to put further pressure on the environment. Clearly, these groups need special assistance to alleviate their plight. This is not a novel idea. We know that in the developed countries there are special arrangements to assist these groups. Such arrangements are all the more necessary in our countries, where they have to apply to the poorest in the poorest of countries: the least developed countries. Failure to address this problem would undermine the democratic system and institutions which we are committed to put in place in our countries.

(Mr. Ssemogerere, Uganda)

Africa is overwhelmingly dependent, for its export earnings, on a narrow range of primary commodities. Diversification into non-traditional exports and the exporting of value-added processed commodities have become a priority for us. We therefore support all efforts towards the early conclusion of the Uruguay Round of trade negotiations under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. It is our hope that those negotiations will result in, among other things, improved market access for the processed and semi-processed goods of all developing countries.

Preparations for the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development are under way. The Conference has given rise to a lot of hope and expectations. Our view is that its outcome should include specific commitments on the effective transfer of environmentally sound technology to developing countries, on non-commercial terms; the provision of adequate new and additional resources, on concessional terms; and a supportive international economic environment that promotes sustainable economic growth and development in the developing countries.

In the case of the developing countries, environmental degradation is a direct consequence of poverty. Discussion of environmental issues in isolation from development is meaningless. For example, in Uganda and elsewhere in Africa people are forced to cut down trees for fuel and for use in constructing dwellings. If forests are to be preserved, alternative sources of energy and of building materials must be secured. For Uganda, as well as some other African countries, the solution lies in securing capital and technology to harness hydro-electric power. This is where the industrialized countries should give a helping hand.

(Mr. Ssemogerere, Uganda)

This Organization has taken a principled stand against racism, of which apartheid is the worst manifestation. Apartheid is a long-standing problem, which has destabilised the whole of southern Africa. There appears to be hope that a solution is in sight. The repeal of the Land Act, the Group Areas Act and the Population Registration Act points in this direction and should be welcomed. We welcome also the other initiatives - particularly the tripartite talks between the leaders of the African National Congress, Inkatha and the South African Government. But our goal in South Africa remains the dismantling of apartheid, with a view to achieving full respect for human and political rights and the establishment of a democratic and non-racial South Africa.

Our position is that the constitution of South Africa is the basic foundation of apartheid. Until that constitution is scrapped and replaced by one that involves the participation, on equal terms, of all South African people, we shall not be able to say that the process of dismantling apartheid has become irreversible. We therefore call upon the South African Government to muster the necessary political will to embrace the letter and spirit of the United Nations Charter and to enter into substantive and conclusive negotiations, which should culminate in a truly democratic political system that accords human and political rights to all.

We have always argued that the problem of apartheid in South Africa is a source of instability in the region as a whole. Some of the positive developments in South Africa, coupled with the end of the cold war, have led to positive trends in the front-line States as well. The agreement between the Government of Angola and UNITA augurs well for that country. It promises to bring an end to the fratricidal war that has cost many lives and crippled

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Angola's economic and social infrastructures. In Mozambique, the Government has shown great boldness in agreeing to engage RENAMO in the negotiations aimed at ending the war. It is regrettable that, so far, RENAMO has not demonstrated seriousness in its approach. It remains our hope that these talks will, in the end, be fruitful.

Front-line States have played, and continue to play, a critical role in the struggle against apartheid. They have made enormous sacrifices in terms of loss of human life and damage to their economies. They deserve support and compensation for the loss consequent upon their bearing the brunt of this struggle. The General Assembly and the Security Council have on numerous occasions called upon the international community to assist the front-line States. We appeal to the international community to respond positively to this call.

The question of Western Sahara has been one of the most conspicuous problems in our region. We are confident that, with the adoption of Security Council resolution 690 (1991), which sets out a plan for a settlement and establishes the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara, the referendum will be held as soon as possible. Uganda will continue to support the efforts of the Secretary-General in this endeavour.

The situation in Liberia and in some parts of eastern Africa is a source of anguish. Uganda's approach is to support regional efforts to promote dialogue and understanding between the parties, with a view to the cessation of the fighting and the provision of long-term solutions. We have therefore supported the initiative of the Economic Community of West African States in the case of the situation in Liberia, and the efforts of the Inter-Governmental Authority on Drought and Development as regards the

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conflict in the Horn of Africa. In our own subregion, Uganda is committed to a comprehensive solution to the problem of refugees, which was agreed on by our Heads of State in February this year in the Dar-es-Salaam Declaration. Implementation of that Declaration would go a long way towards furthering the cause of peace and good-neighbourliness in the region. The international community should be supportive of our regional efforts to find solutions.

The Middle East continues to be a volatile region, and the situation in the area has grave implications for international peace and security. The Gulf area has just gone through the trauma of the war arising from Iraq's occupation of Kuwait. We are happy that the sovereignty, independence and legitimate Government of Kuwait have been restored, and we applaud the steadfastness of the Security Council in this regard. Needless to say, the war had a devastating impact, in terms of the loss of human lives and of material and environmental destruction, on both countries and on the region. The challenge facing the international community in the post-war period is therefore immense and daunting. Having stood up to the challenge of aggression, the United Nations should equally rise to the challenge of fashioning a settlement that would provide a long-term solution.

The international community acted with courage in addressing the Gulf crisis. Equal boldness is called for as regards the twin question of Palestine and Arab-Israeli relations, which remain the core of the Middle East conflict. The General Assembly, in resolution 38/58 C, called for a United Nations international conference on the Middle East, to be attended by all parties concerned, as a framework for the negotiation of a just settlement. The efforts of the United States of America to have a limited international conference convened on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967)

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and 338 (1973) are a positive development. In spite of the onerous demands being made by Israel as regards the Palestinian representation, the Arab countries' response has been constructive. Israel, on the other hand, has continued its provocative policies of constructing new settlements in the occupied territories for Jewish immigrants. Uganda hopes that wiser counsel will prevail in Israel and that the United Nations and the international community as a whole will show determination and perseverance in the search for a just and peaceful resolution of the conflict.

Uganda supports the independence, unity and territorial integrity of Cyprus and the aspiration of its people to live together. We call on both sides to cooperate with the Secretary-General in his efforts to find an acceptable settlement.

As regards the Korean peninsula, Uganda has been supportive of the aspiration of its people for peaceful reunification. The simultaneous admission of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea to membership of the United Nations provides that people with yet another opportunity to continue dialogue and to further their reconciliation and confidence-building efforts.

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In Kampuchea, we are encouraged by the progress registered in the negotiations. A breakthrough has been attained, and Uganda joins other delegations in welcoming to this Assembly Prince Sihanouk in his capacity as Head of State. Uganda looks forward to the adoption and signature of an agreement on Kampuchea at a reconvened Paris conference.

As regards the Afghan crisis, our view remains that all countries should respect the Geneva accords.

The world needs an effective United Nations to manage our interdependence. As regards the reform process in the United Nations, Uganda is supportive of those proposals that are aimed at increasing the effectiveness of the Organization. The framework adopted in General Assembly Resolution 45/264 provides an agreed basis for further negotiations on reforms in the United Nations.

The end of the cold war has provided our generation with a unique opportunity to work in partnership to advance the collective interests of our global village. As members of this global community the generations of the next millennium will judge us on the basis of whether our legacy to them is an order of justice, equity, peace and freedom, and whether or not the well-being of man is at the center of that order.

Allow me now to make some comments on Rwanda.

For his own reasons, the Head of the delegation of Rwanda, Mr. Francois Ngarukiyintwali, elected to raise the issue of Rwanda in this Assembly last Monday and to raise it with the objective of characterizing Uganda as an aggressor or as a party to the conflict in his country.

Uganda has all along rejected and refuted such accusations, and I do so once again. It is the considered view of my delegation that the interests of

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the people of Rwanda, those within Rwanda as well as the very substantial numbers who live in exile abroad, would be best served if Rwanda reciprocated the goodwill of its neighbours, of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) as well as of several friendly countries, and committed itself to the implementation of solutions collectively arrived at in various forums specially convened to address the Rwanda problem. It is as disappointing, as it is fruitless, for Rwanda to be under the illusion that by finding a scapegoat in Uganda the problem of about a million Rwandese living in forced exile will go away.

We may recall the upheaval in Rwanda in 1959 just before the independence of that country, when the monarchy and the then ruling class, consisting almost exclusively of the Tutsi people, were violently overthrown. The massive bloody incidents that accompanied that upheaval forced many of the Tutsi victims to go into exile in all neighbouring countries, including Uganda. Up to this day, Rwanda has failed to evolve and implement a policy of reconciliation to attract back to their motherland these Rwandese exiles. About 100,000 of these exiles live in Uganda, and we would be greatly relieved if another home were found for them. It is some of these aggrieved exiles who took up arms and are engaged in armed conflict inside Rwanda against the Government there.

Ever since this conflict broke out, the African leaders in the region and at the level of the OAU, including the Chairman, have met on more than 10 occasions in search of a peaceful solution to the Rwanda problem. The last such meeting was held only last month on 7 September, at Gbadolite in Zaire, under the chairmanship of President Babangida, Chairman of the OAU, and attended by the OAU Secretary General and by Zaire, Burundi, Tanzania, Rwanda and Uganda. The meeting reached unanimous - I repeat, unanimous - agreement

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on an action plan to resolve the armed conflict. The two belligerent parties were to implement a cease-fire agreement previously agreed upon and signed by them, and they were to enter into a dialogue on 15 September 1991 under President Mobutu's mediation. The cease-fire was to be monitored by an OAU neutral Military Observer Group comprised of Nigeria and Zaire. This is the framework for resolving the armed conflict in Rwanda which calls for Rwanda's commitment and international support; verbal assaults against Uganda or any other country are nothing but manifestations of escapism.

Earlier, in March, a similar framework for peace had been reached under the N'sele Agreement; and the report of the OAU Monitoring Team for the period March-September is available to anyone who wishes to verify Rwanda's allegations against Uganda. These allegations are entirely baseless.

In February this year, a regional conference under the chairmanship of President Mwinyi of Tanzania and with the participation of Rwanda, Zaire, Burundi and Uganda, as well as of the OAU Secretary General and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), was held in Dar-es-Salaam for the purpose of agreeing on a permanent solution to the refugee problem in the region. Although under the agreement Rwanda accepted its responsibility to receive back its nationals in exile under the principle of voluntary repatriation, we have yet to see concrete steps being taken by Rwanda to create conditions there that would make repatriation an attractive proposition. Rwanda's attitude and record in this regard should be compared to those of its neighbours, which also have had to grapple with similar problems.

Uganda stands ready to give every reasonable cooperation to promote all initiatives so far undertaken to resolve both the Rwandese refugee problem and the armed conflict in Rwanda, but Uganda takes strong exception to Rwanda's

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impotence in carrying out its obligations to its nationals in exile and its revelling instead in diversionary tactics and provocative attacks against Uganda.

Rwanda is running the danger of proving to be an ungrateful neighbour. Uganda is providing a livelihood to 100,000 Rwandese nationals who are denied a home in their country. Uganda made its territory available to Rwandese troops in a sincere effort to help Rwanda monitor the border. Uganda invited the OAU Monitoring Team, as well as foreign envoys, to verify Rwanda's allegations of rebel bases in Uganda. All this, and more, was done to promote transparency and build confidence in regional initiatives. Rwanda seems to have elected to ignore all Uganda's goodwill and assistance and would rather engage in a purposeless propaganda campaign abroad, including here in this Assembly. It is a matter of profound regret.

Mr. KALNINS (Latvia): Allow me to convey to the President, on behalf of the Government and people of Latvia and on my own behalf, our sincerest congratulations on his election to preside over this forty-sixth session of the General Assembly. His assumption of this post carries special significance for Latvia, for he is presiding over what is for our country our inaugural session as Members of the United Nations.

I would also like to take this opportunity to convey the best wishes and appreciation of my country to the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar.

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Although Latvia was a founding member of the League of Nations, because of the subsequent foreign occupation of our country, we were unable to participate in the establishment of the United Nations. We have had to wait 47 years for this moment, yet the delay has not diminished the joy that accompanies our rightful and lawful return to the international community. On the contrary, we take special satisfaction in joining an international Organization that has grown in stature and importance through the years, thanks to the leadership and statesmanship of the Secretary-General.

Latvia takes its place in the United Nations at a turning-point in world history. Since the 1920s the people of Latvia have always believed that the existence of any internationally recognized State is an objective reality, one that cannot be eradicated by force. The rapid manner in which global diplomatic ties were renewed with the Baltic States during August and September of this year is, perhaps, one of the most dramatic examples of civilization's progress towards achieving true democracy and international equality in our lifetime. The people of Latvia express their heartfelt gratitude to the Members of the United Nations and to all the nations that have supported us for their profound understanding and support.

In this regard, I should once again like to welcome and congratulate our fellow new Members of the United Nations: the Republic of Korea, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia and our neighbours to the north and south, the Republic of Estonia and the Republic of Lithuania. We are proud to commence our United Nations activities in such distinguished company.

The enthusiasm with which Latvia assumes its role in the United Nations is driven by more than national self-interest. It is our sincere hope that recent developments have given birth to a new era of democracy and cooperation

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in the world. The events of August in the formerly communist Soviet Union have given rise to hopes that from this point onwards, East-West relations will no longer be a source of confrontation but instead a vehicle for solving complex global and regional problems.

We are convinced that Latvia will play an instrumental role in this problem-solving process. It is our belief that now, as has been the case throughout history, Latvia is destined to serve as a natural bridge between Eastern and Western Europe. Where we once served as a battlefield for opposing foreign armies, we can now serve as a crossroads for commercial exchange and economic cooperation. Fully cognizant of this great responsibility, we are ready and eager to make our contribution to the inexorable democratic evolution of the new world order.

To succeed in this undertaking, Latvia must immediately begin the process of addressing a number of critical issues. Primary among them is the reconstruction and rebirth of Latvia's economy. We must train and prepare specialists and professionals whose task it will be both to meet Latvia's immediate needs and simultaneously build an economic structure that will shape Latvia's future role in Europe and the world.

To achieve this goal, the process of restoring Latvia's fully independent statehood must be brought to a conclusion without delay. This includes the removal, as soon as possible, of the foreign troops that continue, illegally, to occupy Latvian soil. A just settlement of this issue in the Baltic region is of crucial importance if we hope to further the process of guaranteeing the long-term security and cooperation of all nations, not only in our region but throughout the world.

We are extremely encouraged by the bold initiative undertaken by the United States of America and endorsed by the Soviet Union, calling for

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substantial reductions of these nations' nuclear weapons. We see this action as the first concrete step towards the relization of our own long-held dream of a nuclear-free Baltic region.

The people of Latvia are ready to work hand in hand with all the peoples of the world. We are opening our doors, our minds and our hearts to all that which has been achieved globally in the areas of economic, humanitarian, environmental and cultural endeavour. We are fully committed to the spirit of open and honest exchange so that we can both learn from that which has already been accomplished and contribute to that which still needs to be done.

We are firmly convinced that through cooperation and coordination with our Baltic neighbours, we can create a geopolitical region that will demonstrate to the world that the transition from the shackles of totalitarian communism to the open democratic structures can be achieved in a peaceful, disciplined and orderly manner.

Just as the United Nations demonstrates the benefits of multilateral, inter-ethnic cooperation, we in Latvia are equally committed to guaranteeing equal rights to all national minorities and individuals in our territory, irrespective of their ethnic origins or ideological convictions. We have taken concrete steps to address the needs and concerns of all those who live within our borders and will continue to develop policies in this direction. Human rights, democracy and adherence to the norms of international law were the guiding principles of our struggle to restore independence and will continue to serve as a foundation for our internal development and reintegration into the world community. It is our hope that from our example, others facing similar obstacles can take both strength and inspiration.

As a Member of the United Nations, Latvia will look to other Member nations, organizations and the Secretariat for guidance and assistance in

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developing the future character and international role of our country. That Latvia's period of reconstruction coincides with a major restructuring of the world order can be viewed as beneficial to all concerned, for it will foster increased cooperation and coordination in all aspects of this developmental process.

For example, we welcome proposals to improve the emergency humanitarian-aid framework within the United Nations and anticipate that such a plan will assist our country and region in developing a coordinated emergency-aid structure of its own.

Similarly, Latvia joins other Members of the United Nations in a call for the repeal of resolution 3379 (XXX) of 10 November 1975 on Zionism. Latvia neither participated in nor supported this resolution at its inception and continues to oppose vigorously all policies that foster mistrust and antagonism between peoples and nations.

The people of Latvia have at long last navigated the stagnant, troubled waters of repression and aggression and have entered the open sea of international cooperation. We fully understand that even these seas can be rough and fraught with dangers, yet we take hope and comfort from the knowledge that we are joined on this journey by a world community committed to security, stability and economic prosperity. The Republic of Latvia stands ready to work with its friends and neighbours in meeting the challenges that lie ahead.*

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* The President returned to the Chair.

Mrs. af UGGLAS (Sweden): Let me start, Sir, by expressing the Swedish Government's deep satisfaction at your election as President for this session of the General Assembly and at the election of the Vice-Presidents. I would also like to convey to the Secretary-General our great appreciation of his devoted efforts over the past 10 years to achieve peace and a stronger United Nations.

Today it is more evident than ever before that humanity is facing challenges and problems of a global nature. The problems are global and must be dealt with globally. Interdependence is the main difference between our modern world and that of previous generations. This is why foreign policy today is more a question of how States act in relation to common problems than how they act towards each other.

In this world of interdependence our global Organization, the United Nations, is an indispensable tool for cooperation. Sweden's commitment to the United Nations, and to all that the Charter stands for, remains a cornerstone of our foreign policy.

The clearest example of interdependence can be found in the environmental sphere. If development is to be possible, the life-sustaining ecological systems must be preserved. At the same time, development is necessary if it is to be possible to safeguard the environment. Development must improve the living conditions of the poor so that they are not forced to destroy the ecological basis for their children's future. Development must also mean that people and countries which enjoy a high standard of living significantly reduce the burden which they impose on the environment. The developing countries need to mobilize their resources, but they also need the transfer of new, additional resources from the industrialized world.

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The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development will be convened in Rio de Janeiro in about eight months' time. We expect that the two conventions on climate change and biological diversity will be effective instruments. We want the Conference to adopt a detailed work programme for the years ahead, indicating clearly the tasks to be undertaken by Governments and organizations to implement the measures agreed upon. We also expect to see an increasing willingness on the part of Governments to solve the problems of financing.

The globalization of vital questions can also be seen in the way in which human rights are perceived. The United Nations is playing an increasingly important role in the defence of human rights in all countries. This role has to be further developed, and the mechanisms created to monitor respect for human rights have to be strengthened. We have often witnessed serious violations of human rights in connection with war or national unrest. Working for respect for fundamental human rights in all countries is an important aspect of efforts to achieve international peace and security.

The multilateral disarmament efforts of the United Nations continue to be among the essential tasks of the Organization, even though important disarmament decisions have been taken unilaterally by the super-Powers or bilaterally in agreements between them.

As regards one of the questions affecting the destiny of the world - the threat of a war involving nuclear weapons or other weapons of mass destruction - 1991 stands out as a memorable year. For the first time we now have an agreement to reduce the arsenals of strategic weapons.

It is is a particular pleasure for me to welcome three neighbouring States as Members of the United Nations. The three Baltic States - Estonia,

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Latvia and Lithuania - have regained their independence and have rapidly received wide international recognition. The Swedish people have been deeply and actively committed to the Baltic peoples' struggle for freedom. We will continue to give our support to the reconstruction of their societies.

The admission of the two Korean States to the United Nations marks an important step on a road which, we hope, will lead to reunification in accordance with the wishes of the Korean people. I welcome them to the United Nations, together with Micronesia and the Marshall Islands.

Europe has truly experienced a revolution of liberty. New conditions and opportunities have opened up for a Europe that has rid itself of the nightmare of totalitarianism and the cold war.

At the historic Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) summit meeting in Paris almost a year ago all the participating States undertook to build, consolidate and strengthen democracy as the only system of government of their nations. They also pledged themselves to promote economic liberty based on the principles of the market economy.

The CSCE's possibilities of tangibly contributing to the realization of the high aims of the Charter of Paris have been strengthened in the last year by the establishment of a crisis mechanism and through the recently concluded CSCE meeting in Moscow on the human dimension.

Sweden warmly welcomes this development in Europe. We would like to participate wholeheartedly in building a new Europe, and are ready to accept our share of the common European responsibility in accordance with the goals of the Paris Charter.

The European Community constitutes the central powerful force in the emerging new Europe. The Community is living proof that purposeful cooperation

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between States can lead to new and dynamic ways of working together and at the same time can relegate traditional tensions to the history books.

Sweden's wish to become a member of the European Community is an expression of our desire to participate in the Community's endeavours to pave the way for new forms of cooperation within the Community and in Europe - a Europe open to the outside world. We are ready to shoulder our part of this responsibility.

The relationship between freedom, democracy and a market economy on the one hand and peace and stability on the other is not only applicable to Europe. This is why the democratic developments which we have seen in so many parts of the world, particularly in the latter half of the 1980s, are so promising. We can witness promising developments in many parts of Africa. And this past decade saw a return to democracy in Latin America. Cuba is one tragic exception. All over the world demands for democracy have become a powerful force. We are convinced that in the long run these demands will prevail. I would like to believe that this will also apply to Haiti. The illegal action against the democratically elected President is unacceptable.

Sweden strongly supports the international trend towards democracy. This is in full conformity with the purposes for which the United Nations was created.

Free trade is of primary importance for growth in all countries. The efforts to create prosperity through open and free economic relations must succeed. The process towards prosperity, in turn, is a prerequisite for an international development towards peace and democracy.

There is a growing awareness of the possibilities that free trade and market solutions also offer for the development of the poorer countries. The

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social consequences of development policies must never be overlooked. At the same time, it is essential that both the economic policies of the developing countries and the focus and orientation of development assistance take advantage of the opportunities offered by market forces.

The three States in Central Europe which are known as the reform States - Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary - are now implementing the principles of democracy, the rule of law and the market economy.

In the Soviet Union dramatic upheavals have taken place. The process of democratization, which is also crucially important for the world community, was threatened for a few days in August. But the coup failed. The democratic forces were victorious. All the people who contributed to this outcome have earned our gratitude and respect.

With the democratization of Central and Eastern Europe, old, artificial barriers have been demolished. We now bear a joint responsibility to prevent the erection of new barriers. The new democracies must not be excluded from the closer cooperation, whether political, economic or in some other form, which is already being realized in western Europe.

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In different ways - bilaterally and in cooperation with other countries - Sweden has tried to support the transition to democratic systems. This commitment stands firm. I should like to underline that the efforts of the Swedish Government in Europe will not affect our assistance to other parts of the world. Sweden will live up to its international commitments regarding development assistance. The allocation of 1 per cent of our gross national income - which we have maintained for many years - stands firm.

We have witnessed terrible bloodshed in Yugoslavia. Recently the army, apparently without political direction, has used brutal force against sections of the population. Sweden views developments in Yugoslavia with the utmost concern and urgently calls on the parties involved to refrain immediately from all acts of violence. Sweden supports and is participating in the efforts, which are being made through the CSCE and the European Community to achieve peace. The international community cannot accept the use of force to change internal and external borders. Any solution must guarantee the rights of minorities in all republics. Sweden welcomes the resolution adopted by the Security Council on 25 September as one step in the international community's endeavours to contribute to a solution of the question of the future of Yugoslavia by peaceful means.

The historic Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) and the recently announced unilateral disarmament decisions by the United States and the Soviet Union are very important steps towards lower levels of armaments and greater security. It is also important for naval tactical nuclear weapons and cruise missiles to be withdrawn and not normally to be deployed on surface vessels and attack submarines. For many years Sweden has stressed the risks associated with these weapons.

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Following on from the American initiative, the Soviet Union recently announced corresponding measures. In addition, President Gorbachev has proposed further reductions of the strategic arsenals beyond the commitments in the START Treaty and has announced a unilateral Soviet test ban for the coming year.

These latest measures by the United States and the Soviet Union reinforce the image of 1991 as a historic year of disarmament. It is very encouraging that the two leading nuclear Powers are demonstrating their special responsibility in this way.

Non-proliferation has been the focus of global attention since the Gulf war. Since then important initiatives have been taken regarding both conventional weapons and weapons of mass destruction. It is my hope that not only 1991, but the next few years also will be marked by the achievement of a more effective control of biological weapons, the speedy conclusion and implementation of the chemical weapons convention as well as the restricted transfer of conventional weapons.

Over the last few decades, several United Nations studies have pointed to the enormous and onerous costs associated with armaments. This has been the case both for nuclear-weapon policy and for conventional armaments in all parts of the world. The weapons have become increasingly sophisticated, ever more costly and with greater destructive power. In this memorable year for disarmament I express the hope that these economic resources will be made available for human development and mutual trust.

Last year much of the world's attention was focused on the situation in the Persian Gulf and in the Middle East. Iraq's brutal aggression against its

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neighbour Kuwait was a flagrant violation of international law and had, unfortunately, to be reversed by military means. Those countries - with the United States in the forefront - which carried out this task on behalf of the international community deserve our recognition and respect. That conflict involved much suffering for the people of Iraq, in common with many others. The material destruction has been enormous. For a long time to come the environment in this area will bear the mark of the meaningless destruction wrought by Iraq.

The aggression unleashed by Saddam Hussein has also turned the attention of the international community to the exposed position of the Kurds. The brutal violence to which that ethnic group has been subjected is unacceptable, as is the violence directed against other parts of the population.

The Iraqi invasion and occupation of Kuwait has been the international community's first serious test since the cold war. It was a unique case of aggression perpetrated by one United Nations Member against another. The United Nations acted swiftly and took coercive measures against Iraq on the basis of Chapter VII of the Charter. In the long-term interests of peace and security it is of crucial importance that aggression should not pay and that potential violators should be prevented from committing crimes against international law.

The events of the past year have not diminished the urgency of the Palestinian question which is the most difficult issue to solve in this part of the world. A solution of this conflict must be based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the implied principle of land for

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peace. Israelis and Palestinians must recognize each other's right to peaceful coexistence. Israel must have the right to exist within secure and internationally recognized borders. The Palestinians' right to self-determination, including their right to form a State of their own, must be accepted by Israel.

The Swedish Government strongly supports the efforts of the United States to bring about a Middle East peace conference. It is essential that the international community should be able to follow the conference through the presence of a United Nations representative.

This conference could be the start of a process which, if successful, would lead to a solution of both the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the Arab-Israeli dispute. There are many obstacles along the way. One is the settlement policy. It is of the utmost importance that all parties demonstrate maximum restraint and a willingness to compromise.

Recently the resolution which equated Zionism with racism again became a topical issue. Sweden's attitude is well known. We voted against the resolution and condemned it in the strongest terms. Our attitude to the resolution is the same today as it was in 1975. The revocation of this resolution should constitute a confidence-building step towards the peaceful settlement which we now hope is under way.

In South Africa the most important racial laws of the apartheid system have already been abolished. The next step will be to introduce a democratic form of government with votes for all, irrespective of race. Negotiations to this end are approaching rapidly. The difficulties - above all in the form of the violence which is now afflicting many of the black townships - should not

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be underestimated. Nevertheless, a historic process has been initiated. We look forward to the day when the question of apartheid can be deleted from the United Nations agenda.

Sweden continues to support the work against apartheid. The Swedish Government hopes that developments will soon make it possible for Sweden to lift its sanctions against South Africa.

There are still several conflicts around the world that remain on the international agenda, namely Cambodia, the Horn of Africa, Afghanistan, Western Sahara, Central America and Cyprus. The common denominator in all these conflicts is that the role of the United Nations - as different as it may be depending on the nature of the conflict - is crucial for progress towards a final solution.

The world Organization is facing a period of new demands and expectations. Sweden is participating actively in the current discussions about the United Nations and its future role.

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An important lesson that can be drawn from the crisis in the Persian Gulf is that the United Nations must place a special emphasis on preventive diplomacy, as well as the strengthening of its capacity to respond to emergencies. Careful consideration should be given to how, in more concrete terms, the United Nations capabilities in the area of preventive diplomacy can be strengthened. The ability to identify threatening situations and intervene at an early stage should be improved. Japan, among others, has put forward valuable proposals in this regard.

In the new, changing political situation, opportunities have increased for a constructive interaction between an active Security Council and the Secretary-General. In order to give the Secretary-General the necessary support in the role the Charter confers upon him, it is evident - as he himself points out in his annual report - that more resources are needed.

When emergencies occur, the United Nations must be able to act quickly, efficiently and in a coordinated manner. The preparedness of the relevant United Nations organs must be improved, as well as the coordinating mechanisms. But the United Nations and its organs can act only if the Member States give it sufficient and flexible resources.

Sweden welcomes the reform programme that was adopted earlier this year in the economic and social field. It is clear, however, that it is not enough to confine reform to the Economic and Social Council itself. We attach considerable importance to the review to be undertaken of subsidiary bodies and of the division of labour between the Council and the General Assembly.

In May the final report of the Nordic countries' United Nations Project was submitted to the Secretary-General. This report summarizes reform proposals in the economic and social area, involving such questions as the

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opportunity and ability of Member States to govern the operational activities of the United Nations system, as well as the possibility of devising a more adequate financing system for these activities. The Nordic countries are now aiming at establishing a broad basis of support among Member States for continued constructive reform of the United Nations in this field. We consider the high-level meeting of the Economic and Social Council scheduled for next summer to be an appropriate occasion for an in-depth, substantive discussion of these questions.

In the past year, important discussions on possible reforms in a number of different areas have been initiated. They involve economic and social activities, peace-keeping operations, emergency relief, the work of the General Assembly and forms of cooperation within the United Nations system. The reorganization of the Secretariat is a priority item. Interesting proposals have also been put forward by independent groups and influential individuals, for example in the so-called Stockholm Initiative.

In today's favourable climate for international cooperation, the Member States are giving to the United Nations a number of tasks that put heavy demands on resources. It is highly ironic and unacceptable that the United Nations is still forced to conduct its operations under the shadow of a continuing financial crisis. It should be a question of honour for every Member State to fulfil its obligations under the Charter in a timely manner.

The developing countries must be principally responsible for their own economic and social development. But, at the same time, it is in the interest of the industrialized world actively to assist in the process towards a more just world. The debt crisis has not yet been overcome. In particular, the poorest countries need substantial debt-relief measures. We urge all member

(Mrs. af Ugglas, Sweden)

States of the Paris Club to contribute actively to an agreement on substantial debt reduction.

Resources for development assistance must be expanded. It is deeply unsatisfactory that the industrialized countries have not managed to meet the United Nations target for development assistance of 0.7 per cent of gross national product, despite a decade of relatively high growth in the industrialized world and growing needs of the developing countries. Stagnating resource flows are a short-sighted strategy in a world that is increasingly characterized by the interdependence of nations. Thus, we have a common interest to ensure that this long-accepted target is reached.

The end of the cold war gives the United Nations a historic opportunity for action. A new outlook can be developed in international politics. The world is no longer a geopolitical chess-board, with States as pawns in a game. Rather, it is a congress of nations, where all people are equally entitled to political freedom, economic and social justice, a healthy environment and full human rights. This means a positive challenge. Our cooperation in the United Nations is based on respect for national sovereignty. At the same time, there is a growing awareness that the United Nations must also bear its share of responsibility for developments that directly affect the inhabitants of our societies. A balance has to be struck between the requirements of sovereignty and those of solidarity.

Both the demands of justice and enlightened self-interest lead us to the same conclusion: we need a strong United Nations at a time of growing interdependence and global challenges. Let us get down to work.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.